AN EPISTLE TO FRIENDS,

Shewing, The Great Difference between a **Convinced Estate** and a **Converted Estate**;

And between the **Profession** of the **Truth**, and the **Possession** thereof;

With the Comfort and Sweetness to the Soul it **Affordeth**.

With a Few Words of Good Counsel and Wholesome Advice both to **Parents** and their **Children**.

By One, that Travels for Sion's *Prosperity, known by the Name of*

John Banks.

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An Epiſtle to Friends, ſhewing the great Difference between a *Convinced Eſtate*, and a *Converted Eſtate*; And between the *Profeſſion* of the Truth, and the *Poſſeſſion* thereof; with the Comfort and ſweetneſs to the Soul it Affordeth. *&c.*

SInce the Dawning of the Heavenly Day and living Appearance of the pure God, and Riſing of his Glorious Son by his Light, Grace and *Holy Spirit*, *many* have been called and *Convinced* of the Truth and way of God, what it is, and how they might walk therein: This Knowledge hath been given, to *many*, of God in and through *Jeſus Chriſt*, his Son, by his Light, Grace and Holy Spirit put and placed in the Hearts and Conſciences of the Sons and Daughters of Men.

Now, that which the Lord Requires thereby, is *Obedience* and *Faithfulneſs* thereunto, according to the Knowledge ſo given, which is to *deny Self*, and take up and willingly bear the *Croſs* of our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt*, which Crucifies to the World, and the World to them withall its vile Affections and Luſt; theſe come to know not only a *Convinced Eſtate*, but a *Converſion* in their Hearts and Souls.

Now the *Counſel* of *God*, that in my Heart and Soul remains, in Bowels of true Love, Tenderneſs and Compaſſion, and as a *Faithful Warning* alſo unto all ſuch, who have remained (whether many Years, or few) under a *Convincement*, or in a *Convinced Eſtate*, is, *That* you carefully and in true fear *yield pure Obedience unto God, according to the Knowledge he hath given you* by his pure *Light*, *Grace* and *Holy Spirit*; being no ſacrifice ſhort of this, doth find Acceptance with him: who by the ſame lets you ſee, and accordingly teaches you *what* you ſhall *deny your ſelves in?* What you muſt part with

and forsake? What you should do, and what you should not (in order to your *Conversion*:) according to that saying, and *Sanctification*.

I say, as having a Stress upon my Spirit, in the Love of God unto all you, as before; *Yield Obedience unto God according to the Knowledge you have received from him*, and do no longer satisfie your selves, nor speak Peace to your selves, because you are *Convinced* of the *Truth*, and because you know the *Truth* and *Way* of *God*, what it is, and so make a *Profession* thereof; think not that this *Knowledge* will serve your turn to justifie you in the sight of God, *Heb.* 5.8. short of *Obedience*. For Christ himself, though he was the Son of God, he learned *Obedience*; and how much more ought the Sons and Daughters of men learn *Obedience*, though never so Rich, Wise, Great and Potent in the World, or never so much Accounted of among the Sons and Daughters of Men: That so through *Obedience* to the known Will and requirings of God, you may come to feel and be sensible of the work of his Power and Holy Spirit in your Hearts, there to Change you, to work and *Convert* you into the nature of Truth, to the bearing of the Heavenly Image thereof: The working of which, as it's truly waited for and kept to (*viz.*) the Power, begets Fear towards God, least such should disobey him, or grieve his good Spirit; and so effects Brokenness and Tenderness of Heart and Spirit before the Lord, and works into lowliness of mind in carriage and Behaviour before all people; softens the hard Heart, brings down the high mind, and proud and lofty Spirit, and subjects the stiff and unruly will and nature. And they who come to know this Work wrought in them, in order to their *Conversion*, come to know it in and under, and after their being so *Convinced*, they must and do come to know it through *Judgment*, which they must love, and patiently dwell in, if ever they come to know a *Converted Estate*. Through the same (to wit *Judgment*) be set up and kindled in their Hearts as a *Fire*, and know the Word of God as a Sword and Hammer, yet notwithstanding it must be loved: For so said the Prophet; *How do I love thy Judgments*: And Christ said, *I will not break*

the

the bruised Reed, nor quench the smoaking Flax, until *Judgment* be brought forth unto *Victory*.

So have a Care (all, who are *Convinced*, and do make a *Confession* to, and *Profession* of the Truth) of presuming upon the Mercies of the Lord in your *Disobedience*, and flying *Judgment*, or that which *Judgeth* you because of your *Disobedience*, and flying the Cross.

For *Judgment*, you must either know and love, and patiently dwell in and keep to, or else your hard Hearts you can never know *Converted* and Changed; and the Word of God as a *sharp two edged Sword*, that will cause pain in your Bowels, and beget Godly Sorrow in you to bring you to true *Repentance*, by weeping and mourning for your *Disobedience*, you must either know and love, or else the *First-born* in you can never come to be *slain*, which is that Life in that Nature, that you have lived after the Flesh, in doing and having your own Wills, in fulfilling your own Hearts Lusts; and the Word of God as a *Fire*, you must either know and love, and patientely dwell in, and Judgment to be set up and executed in your Hearts, or else you can never know the *Combustable matter* there *Consumed*; the *Bryars* and the *Thorns*, the *Love* of the *World*, the *Lust* of the *Flesh*, the *Lust* of the *Eye*, the *Pride* of *Life*, the *Cares* of the *World*, which is said to *Choak* the good Seed, as to the coming of it up in its Growth, in the Hearts of People. I thus set forth unto you that the way of your Redemption out of Captivity and Spiritual Bondage, and to come to a *Converted Estate*, must be in and through *Judgment*, and that as by a *Fire* and *Hammer*, or *Sword*, think it not hard; for it's the right Door to come in by to receive *Mercy* from the Lord's Hand; of whom it's said, *He mixes Mercy with Judgment* (but then the *Judgment* must be owned.) And though many are they in number, that are living Witnesses, this has been the Way of the dealings of God with their Souls; and it was to them, and to you in the Offers of it *God's free Love* in and through Jesus Christ his Son, who said: *For Judgment I am come into the World*; and all *Judgment* is committed unto him. *John* 5. 22.

So

So now all ye, who remain in a *Convinced Eſtate*, and live and act contrary to that which Convinceth you, ye ſhould not there remain in *Diſobedience*: for ye may ſee (if ye will but turn in your minds in fear towards God) the great Difference between a *Convinced Eſtate*, and a *Converted Eſtate*. For the Hearts, Souls and Spirits of thoſe that are turn'd to God in Righteouſneſs, and ſo truly *Converted* and changed, and have known a paſſing from Death unto Life the way I have ſhewed you, they are *Broken-hearted*, *Lowly-minded*, and in their Souls and Spirits their remains a true Tenderneſs; and ſuch are concerned to ſet a watch before their Lips daily, that they may not offend with their Tongues! and not only in *words* but in *Actions*; and that they may live the life of Truth they make profeſſion of. And it's ſuch that grows in Grace and Saving knowledge, and that proſper in their *Gifts* given unto them of the *Free-Giver* (who fear him always) and that to his Praiſe and Glory, and their remaining Comfort and Souls ſweet Satisfaction.

And therefore is it, that the Hearts of the *truly Converted* are fitted and prepared by the power of God to *offer Offerings* and *Sacrifices* unto him, that find Acceptance with him.

But the Hearts of the Convinced, that live in Diſobedience, and are not willing to bear the daily Croſs, nor come under Judgment, are not ſo, but are hard; and their minds high, not Subject to the Yoke of Chriſt, nor willing to bear his burthen; and yet can ſatisfie your ſelves in *Coming as the People come, and ſit as God's People ſit* in their Meetings and Aſſemblies, and *like to hear thy Words* (as the Lord ſaid by the Prophet) *but will not do them; and thou art unto them*, ſaith the Lord *as a lovely Song, as one that hath a pleaſant Voice, and can play Well upon an Inſtrument: and they ſhew forth much Love with their Mouths; but their Hearts go after their Covetouſneſs.* Therefore let theſe things be as Warnings unto you, all that only remain in a *Convinced ſtate*, and bear *Profeſſion* of the Truth, ſhort of the *Poſſeſſion* thereof: and take Warning betimes, receive Counſel and give ear to inſtruction, and own reproof, for it is the Way of Life, before Death ſeize upon you, that will ſtay

Ezek. 33. 31.

Prov. 6, 23. *cap.* 15. 10.

ſtay no Man or Womans time nor leiſure to Repent, and Amend their wayes and doings; leaſt that day and Hour come upon you, as a *Thief in the Night*, that you, like the fooliſh Virgins, are not aware of. And then You finding your ſelves not fitted and prepared to go hence, be made to cry upon your *Death-beds*, when *time* that you had, is ſpent (in forgetfulneſs of God, and the many warnings you have had) *Lord, open to us!* But if you put off the Day and time of the amendment of your wayes and doings until then, you know aforehand, what will be the Anſwer you muſt have given you: Firſt, *The Door of Mercy will be ſhut* againſt you, that have not loved *Judgment* In your life-time; and the Anſwer will be, *Depart from me I know you not.* *Matth.* 25. 10, 11, 12.

I Called and Cried, but ye would not hear; and therefore you ſhall call and cry, but I will not Anſwer. Oh! how long has the Lord Called and Cried, and Knockt at the Door of your Hearts, and ſtriven with you by his good Spirit, as by an Immediate Hand, who would often thereby have retained you from your backſlidings and unfaithfulneſs, and Diſobedience; who hath not been ſevere in marking what you have done amiſs, and therefore you have preſumed upon his patience and long-ſuffering (*Do ſo no more*, that's Chriſt's Leſſon) And ſometimes when, becauſe of the Long-ſuffering of God to you ward, it hath entred your Hearts to conſider, how juſt it might have been with him, to have *Cut you off* long ere now in his Wrath for your *Diſobedience*! No doubt, but ſometimes you have made *Vows* and *Promiſes* in Your ſelves, You would do ſo no more, as heretofore you had Done: And after all this for want of Watchfulneſs over the outgoings of your minds, and for want of taking true heed unto the ſhinings of the pure *Light* of *Jeſus Chriſt* that Diſcovered your State and condition to you, as it was, and for want of keeping the fear of the Lord before your Eyes, the Enemies of your Souls with his old Baits in the fair proffers of them you have again Entered this Temptation, and ſo have ſinned and rebelled againſt, and contrary to the ſtriving of his good Spirit, the Spirit of *Truth*, and Contrary to his pure Counſel, the Light, wherein the true power is received to *reſiſt the wicked one* in all his Devices,

Devices, who believe therein, and keep
John 3. 19. thereto! which pure Light will for ever be the *Condemnation* of those that do not love it, and that are not willing to bring their deeds to it, that they may be manifest whether they are wrought in
John 3. 21. God or no; for all the Children of the *Light* and of the *Day* bring their *Deeds* to it.

And besides the many *Visitations* of *God's Love* to you by an immediate Hand, by the strivings of his good Spirit in your Hearts, or at the Door of your Hearts; O the *Labour*, *Travel* and *Exercise* of God's *Servants*, *Ministers* and *Messengers*, with which they have been attended, and weightily concerned, many times both in *Body* and *Spirit* in their Testimonies, in Love, good will and true Tenderness for the good of your immortal Souls. And yet notwithstanding the Lord's great and large Love to you *First* in calling you by his
Tit. 2. 11, 12. Grace out of the World, and the ways and dead Worships and Forms of it, and in it, and his giving you a knowledge of his Will and Mind thereby, that you might learn Obedience accordingly; and notwithstanding the striving of his Holy Spirit in order to bring you thereunto; *together* with the great Labour, Travel and Pains, that the Servants of Christ have been willing to take, and Travel many Hundreds of Miles over *Sea* and Land, through Difficulties and various Exercises, willingly leaving behind them, whatsoever is near and dear unto them, or never so good and lawful in it self, for the good of your Souls, with the rest of God's People, yea, in love to all People; in and through all which the *Love* of *God* has been and is largely held forth unto you. And yet notwithstanding all this, and much more that might be mentioned, hath it not proved the unhappiness of too many of you *Professing* the *Truth*, that are not come to *possess* the same, because of your unfaithfulness, that you have requited both the Lord and his Servants *Evil* for *Good*, and have chosen your own way, and followed the Counsel of your own Hearts Lusts, being *unconverted*, and spoken Peace to your selves in a polluted rest? And are not some of you too much like those the Lord speaks of by the Prophet *Ezekiel*, when he said, *Son of Man*, the

Children

Children of thy people are ſtill talking againſt thee by the Walls and in the Doors, ſaying one to another, and every man to his Brother, I pray you, let us hear the Word that cometh forth from the mouth of the Lord: Which although, as I have hinted, they *confeſſed* unto, and ſeemingly liked to hear, yet they were not willing to do accordingly. *And when this cometh to paſs (and it will, ſaith the Lord) they ſhall know there hath been a Prophet among them.*

Methinks it ſounds in my Ears, as though they ſpake *mockingly*, or in Deriſon, Scorn or diſlike againſt the Prophet; and it were well, if this proved not the State and Condition of too many *profeſſing Truth* in our day! But I fear, and have a Godly Jealouſy, and have ſeen and felt too much of it, in my Travels and various Exerciſes, that there are too many that undervalue and diſ-eſteem the *Labour* and *Travel* of *God's Servants*, *Miniſters* and *Meſſengers*, yea, the very Ancient and Elder Brethren, as well as the Younger, except they appear as theſe, that are very *Wiſe* and Eloquent (though in the Life and Power) and by a proud, diſdainful, Lordly Spirit, that is of an Earthly Savour, are often buſying themſelves, and *Whiſpering*, and *tatling* and *talking* againſt *Faithful Brethren*, that have born the burthen in the *Heat* of the *Day*. And if you can but eſpy any *failure* or *weakneſs* (as you think) in or by any of them, though but one of a Thouſand, as to what you will take Liberties to your ſelves to do, and yet juſtify your ſelves therein, though readily *Judge* and *Condemn* them, Do not you think thereby to *cover* your Iniquity and Diſobedience: For I muſt tell you in Love and true Tenderneſs, you will find your ſelves greatly miſtaken and deceived by the *Enemy* of your *Souls*, who through his Subtilty perſwades you to believe his *Lyes*, and that in the day and time of your Account: For according to the Deeds done in your own body, or by your ſelves, ſo muſt your reward be, whether they be good or evil.

Why *talked* the People, *that ſate as God's People did*, againſt the Prophet in his Name? Was it for any other thing, than *ſpeaking the Word of the Lord*? What do ſome in our Day *ſpeak* and *talk* one to another againſt the Servants of Chriſt for, as though (in their account) if every one appears not in

 their

their Teſtimony as an *Eye* or a Hand, they muſt have no place in the Work of God; but are Cut off and thrown away, in their Judgment? Is it now any more than in the Prophets time? Is it for any thing elſe, but becauſe thoſe that have the *Word* now, muſt ſpeak it in Faithfulneſs unto all, that ſuch is ſpoken againſt? And are they counted Ene-
Gal. 4. 16. mies therefore by ſome? As *Paul* ſaid, that bleſſed Apoſtle in his time. Oh! When will your minds change! When will your Hearts be rent and tender'd to the humbling of you under the Conſideration of thoſe things! And not ſo to abuſe your own Mercies, or the Mercies and large loving kindneſſes of the Lord thus held forth and continued unto you! Why is *Wit*, why is *Wiſdom* in the man's part, *Wealth* and the *Strength* of Mans *Reaſon* ſo much accounted of, and ſuch ſo Eſteemed, and others more ſimple undervalued? And why is the *Simplicity* of the *Goſpel* ſo trodden down and run over by too many in the overlineſs? Do not you ſee, and will you not Conſider, how the Lord has and will *confound the Wiſdom of the Wiſe, and bring to nothing the underſtanding of the Prudent ones*, who exalt themſelves thereby? For he giveth more Grace to the humble, and will exalt the Man of low Degree; and ſuch ſhall be Abaſed.

The bleſſed Apoſtle came not with *inticing words of Mens Wiſdom*, neither the words that *Mens Wiſdom* teacheth; but in the Demonſtration of the Power and Spirit of God: So they that exalt themſelves, though never ſo *high* in *words*, *excellent ſpeeches* and *Scholaſtick Terms*, and though they be never ſo much cried up, the Lord will, as he has done, *Caſt down* ſuch; as by woful Experience too much it is to be ſeen by thoſe that by a *light airy Spirit*, notwithſtanding their words, have floated above the pure ſimplicity of the Goſpel. So all keep low, and there is ſafety.

What do ſome under a *Profeſſion* of the Truth, though out of the *Poſſeſſion* thereof, and Life and Practice of the ſame, think themſelves ſo ſecure, that becauſe of *Eaſe*, *peace* and *Liberty* (though but outward) have and do ſo continue, there is no ſuch need of Diligence and Faithfulneſs towards God; and as though it were afforded that they might ſeek themſelves,

ſelves, and ſerve themſelves, and make uſe of their time to grow *Rich* and *Great* in the World, and as though this *Day* would ſtill laſt, to ſuch unfaithful ones: Oh, I tell you *Nay*, you deceive your ſelves therein: For God hath determined to Viſit this Nation, and the People thereof as by a *Rod* and a *Scourge*, becauſe of the Sins and Abominations thereof: For his Soul is vexed, and his holy Spirit is grieved even into Wrath and Sore Diſpleaſure. And you that *Rom.* 1. 18. make a *Profeſſion* of his Name, and not in Truth and Righteouſneſs, who ſow to the Fleſh, and not unto the Spirit, do not think to eſcape the *Judgement* without a timely Repentance: for you are neither one with that of God in yourſelves, nor in Unity with his people; and in the Execution of his righteous Judgement upon this Nation you will be found in the *Outer Court*, to be troden under the foot of the *Gentiles*. And yet notwithſtanding, *Revel.* 11. 2. whatſoever the Lord ſees good to bring to paſs in the Earth, as he alwayes had, he hath ſtill a way and place to *preſerve his Faithful Ones*, as in a City within the Gate, within the Door, whoſe Walls is Salvation, or as thoſe that know *Salvation for Walls and Bulwarks*. So ſtay not behind in *careleſneſs*, neither abide any longer in the *Outer Court*, though ſeemingly you may enjoy *Eaſe*, *peace* and *fulneſs* for a time, *Trouble* and *Perplexity* will overtake all ſuch. So make good uſe of the time, the Lord in love and mercy may yet afford you, and ſtrive with diligence and fear to get within the *Wall* into the *Inner Court*, that is, into the Life, into the Power, into the *Poſſeſſion* of the *Truth*, you make *Profeſſion* of, or elſe you will be left behind, liable to be *deſtroyed by the Deſtroyer, and devoured by the Devourer*. Then you ſhall remember, that I with many of God's faithful Servants, have given you a faithful friendly Warning.

Now through all theſe things you may ſee, that are ſerious and Conſiderate, the great and vaſt Difference between a *Convinced Eſtate*, and a *Converted Eſtate*, and between the *Profeſſion* of the Truth barely, and the *Poſſeſſor* thereof. For the *Profeſſor* of the Truth in words, out of the Life and Practice, is dry, barren and empty, and unſenſible of Life in their Souls, out of the *Faith* that gives *Victory*; *Wells without*

out Water, Clouds without Rain, minding Earthly things more then heavenly; *Reprobate Silver* shall men call them, who because of their Extraordinary love to, and gaping after the World in too much love thereunto, more than to God, his Truth and People, or for the good of their own Souls. For if some, that profess the Truth, were but as much concerned in faithfulness to God, and for the good of their own Souls; in order to win Heaven and the Salvation thereof, as they are concerned for the Earth, and to heap up Riches they know not for whom, well might it be with many as to their Eternal Happiness.

But being that such are many times more concerned for the Assurance of the *Terrestial*, than the *Celestial* (*viz.*) more for the *Earthly* than the *Heavenly*, hence it is, that although such *profess* the Truth and the Worship of God amongst his People, they grow very Indifferent about the performance of it: For they can scarce find any time to come to *Meetings*, but on the *First Day*. What differ these from the *Professor* and *Prophane* in the World? Let such say so to themselves, and amend their wayes and doings. And when such do come to *Meetings*, its too Apparent where their *Treasure* is, and their *Hearts* are with it, to wit, in the *Earth*: And so their minds and heads are pull'd down-ward, by reason of the weight of it upon them. And hence it is, that such are *Dead*, *Dry*, *Sottish*, *Careless* and *Sleepy* in Meetings, which sheweth forth the coldness of their Love to God-ward, his Truth and People, and worthy Name of the Lord; and how unconcerned they are for the Management of the Affairs and concerns of Truth in *Men* and *Womens Meetings*, and neglect *Week-day-Meetings*. And yet none readier than such to Judge and Censure those that are faithful, deligent and laborious, and wholly devoted, what in them lies, to serve the Lord, his Truth and People, both in managing and maintaining the Affair and Concerns of Truth. This is the Trick of all *Idoles*, that would *Eat*, but will not *Work* themselves, to *judge and find many Faults* with them that are deligent in their Labour and Concern; which maketh the Labour and Travel of God's faithful Servants, that have his Work to do, and his Word to speak, sometimes hard and uneasie, because

because often the Work is great, and the Labourers but few: So it must needs lie heavy upon some, though censoriously judged for their pains. Howbeit, notwithstanding some in our day, as the Prophet in his time, *Labour in vain, and spend their Strength for nought*, as to Effect good to the unconcerned; yet their peace is with the Lord, and their reward cometh from him; Praises, pure Honour and Glory be given to his Holy Name and great Power forever more, saith my Soul, who will not have any to shut a Door in his House for nought.

Go to the Ant, thou Sluggard; Consider her ways, and be wise, thou Sleepy, Lazy one: For though she have no Guides, Overseer nor Ruler, that thou Professest to have, that *Professest* the Truth; and yet out of the *Possession*; yet she, the poor *Ant*, *provideth her Meat in the Summer, and gathers her food in the Harvest. How long wilt thou Sleep, O Sluggard? When wilt thou rise from thy Sleep? Thinkest thou? What, yet more Sleep, and yet more Slumber? And yet more folding of thy Hands together? So shall thy Poverty come upon thee, as one that Travelleth, and thy Want as an armed Man.* Prov. 6. v. 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11.

Wherefore there is a Cry in the secret of my Soul unto all you *Professors* of Truth, that are not yet come into the *Possession* thereof, to *come away*: arise, and stand up upon your Feet, both Man and Woman, and shake your selves from the Dust of the Earth. For Dust is a stifling and choaking thing; why are you so willing to *Travel* with such a burthen upon your Heart and Mind, as the Earth is? by reason of which the just Pure Seed of God is oppressed in you, which causeth in you to Groan in your *Travel*. Wherefore the time of *Meeting*, and when you should wait upon, Worship and serve God, is wearisom and tedious unto you. Oh! Come away, come away all you, that make *Profession* of the Truth, and yet feel not of the sweetness and comfort that it affords to the Souls of those that are in the *Profession*, and live the Life thereof: Come away, escape for your lives to *Zoar*, the City of safety, and look not back into *Sodom* again: Remember *Lot's* Wife: And once at last, quit your selves *like Men* and *Women* for God, and not only like,

Luke 17. 32.

but really so: And really and willingly part with, forsake and cast off all those many things that have been so glued to your minds, or your minds to them; that have been as so many *Lovers* hugged in your Bosoum, all which is but as an *Harlot* you are joyned unto. So your serving and *Profession* has been and is in the Flesh, where you cannot please God. Cast of all these *hiding*, *cumbering things*, that you have too long so much loved, by which the Enemy of your Souls hath lulled you asleep, that have hindred you from embracing of the Love of God in your Hearts, in and through Jesus Christ his Son; that room there, and openness there, (instead of straitness) and clearness may be. For the Appearance of God's Son in his Glorious Rising and living Appearance, by his pure *Light*, teaching *Grace* and Holy *Spirit*, that will not only shine to let you *See*, but *Teach* you what you shall deny your selves in and of, but what manner of Lives you must live: And not only so, but as you believe and wait upon God, therein Power you shall receive, whereby you may be enabled to answer and perform the same; that instead of a bare *Profession*, you may come to know the *Possession* of Life and Power, true Peace, Sweetness and Comfort in your Hearts and Souls; and instead of wearisomness and irksomness in the time of Meeting among God's People, you may come to have a sure Delight in the Joy of God's Salvation, in waiting upon (though in Silence) and worshiping and serving of God in Spirit and Truth, as all the Faithful have, that are in the *Possession* of that they make *Profession* of; and that instead of Deadness, Dullness, Sleepiness and Unconcernedness in *Meetings* and Conversation too, you may come through Faithfulness and true Obedience, in a self-denial and bearing the daily Cross, to feel a change wrought in your Hearts through the Power that is of God, in and through the Execution of the righteous Judgment, and so come to be quickned and enlivened by the quickning Spirit of the *second Adam*, the *Lord from Heaven*; and so come to have living concern to attend your Hearts and Minds, both in *Meeting* and *Conversation*; as all that live the life of Truth they make *Profession* of, are attended with; which makes them to say, because of the Sweetness and Comfort their Souls are in a *Possession* of, that is a

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ſtream from a Fountain, or a living ſpring from a Well, even the Fountain and Well of Life; Oh, *Truth* is pretious unto me! I would ſell or part with any thing that I have, that is to be priced with, that I might purchaſe more of the fulneſs of it: But I would not ſell it for all the World, nor no Enjoymene that is in it, neither a *Wife*, nor an *Husband*, nor any *Poſſeſſion* or Enjoyment here below, though never ſo great, fair or promiſing. For ſuch ſay in their Hearts, that commends them to God, *My beloved* (to wit, the *Truth*) *is mine, and I am his*, the fairest and chiefest unto me of *Ten Thouſands*. And ſuch it is in their heavenly and Spiritual Exercise, that ſit where the *Spouſe* of old did, which is under his Shadows, and that with great delight; and his *Fruit* is ſweet unto their Taſte.

And theſe are they, that above all things *Truth* is pretious unto, that feel, partake, poſſeſs and enjoy of the ſweetneſs and pretiouſneſs thereof in their Hearts and Souls, as I even at this moment of time, with all the truly Faithful and Obedient do; to the Praiſe and Glory of the moſt high God be it ſpoken. Wherefore my Heart and Soul is broken and melted into true Tenderneſs before him, which makes me to ſay again in anſwer to that weighty concern, that ſeized upon my Spirit as I was waiting upon the Lord in my own dwelling-Houſe (when ſuch weakneſs of body attended me, that I was not able to go to a Meeting) to write on this wiſe, for the good of all I am thus concerned for, in this my Epiſtle. Oh, the great Difference between a *Convinced Eſtate*, and a *Converted Eſtate*: between the *Profeſſion* of the Truth, and the *Poſſeſſion* thereof, and that chiefly, becauſe of the Sweetneſs and Comfort it affordeth unto the Souls of the Faithful. So that I was truly willing, in Obedience to the bleſſed requirings of the Lord my God, on this wiſe to diſcharge my Conſcience, and eaſe my Spirit in anſwer unto the movings and motion of his Pure, Holy, Living Spirit, that (bleſſed be his Holy Name for evermore) he hath made me, with a large Remnant, livingly ſenſible of, deſiring and heartily wiſhing, that my endeavours hereby may be truly Effectual for the good of all that may be concerned in this my Teſtimony.

And now *Friends*, unto you that are *Parents*, and that have *Children*, I have ſomething to ſay both to *you*, and your *Children*.

And in the *firſt* place, the concern that is upon my mind, and hath often and long remained, is to give you to underſtand a little of my own Experience and concern in *Ordering* and *Training* up of my own *Children*, that if happily it may tend to ſtir up thoſe, or ſuch as may be ſhort in their *Duty* towards their *Children*.

When it pleaſed the Lord to give me *Children*, as Mercies from his hand (amongſt many more I have received from him) as my *Children* grew up, a concern many times, very weighty, (the Lord knows) ſeized upon my mind, both upon my Bed, and many other times, what way I might betake my ſelf to Train up my *Children*, as did become the Truth, and that might become a Bleſſing to them, and a Comfort to us their *Parents*. And accordingly I ſaw it my way, as much as in me lay, that as they grew up in years, to mind and take diligent notice of their *Natural Inclination*, or what it was they moſt *naturally Inclined* unto: And when I ſaw any one of them to *Incline* to any thing in *Words* or *Actions*, that under a ſerious Conſideration was not like to prove, if it was ſuffered to grow or increaſe, either to be good for their *Soul* or *Body* (for that which is not good for the *Soul*, it cannot be good for the *Body*) it greatly became my concern to *Reſtrain* them from that, when it was but little and ſmall, and when they were *young*; ſo that it was both eaſie for me to do, and them to get over. And when I found any thing of *Stubbornneſs* get up in them, contrary to the counſel and Advice I had given them, I did not let *fooliſh pity* prevent due Admonition and Correction, though I dearly and tenderly did and do *love* them all.

But ſome ſpoil their *Children*, in letting them have their *Wills* ſo much, that they become diſobedient and rebellious, and ſo give away their Power ſo much to the *Will* of the *Child*, and leſſen their Authority: That as ſometimes I have heard to the grief of my Soul, *Parents* ſay to *Children*, Do ſuch a thing; they have replied, (*I will not*:) And whether ought the *Child*, that doth not yet underſtand what's good either for its

its *Soul* or *Body*, to have its *Will*? Or ought not the *Parents* rather to Constrain them to do what they know is good for them, though they be *stiff* and *stubborn*? That so, what way or course in after-time their *Children* may take when they are from under their power, the *Parents* may be clear of their *Children* in the day of their Account.

I say, my great concern was many times, how I might *Train* up my *Children*, as did become the *Truth*, chiefly in what might be good for their *Souls*; relying upon Gods Providence for other things, as he did see good. And as they came up in their tender Years one after another, in the Fear of God, I laboured what in me lay, not only by *Advice* and *Counsel* and timely Endeavours, to restrain the *wild* and *stubborn* nature, and keep them out of and from every thing, that had an evil tendency in it; but also what in me lay, to beget *Love* in them to Truth and *Friends*, and one to another.

And so, as they grew up in years, did encourage them to go to *Meetings*: And I hope I may say without offence, my *Endeavours* (with the Blessing of God) hath wrought a good *Effect* in my *Children* to this day, I bless the Lord for it; and I never durst put them forward to *Play*, as some do; and when they had a Capacity, educated them in reading the Holy Scriptures and Friends Books: And alwayes had and have a care to keep them out of the vain Fashions of the World; neither could I ever suffer them to go to see or behold any *Sport*, *Game*, or *Pastime*, or *Play*, that tends to nothing but stirring up of the vain, light mind, and letting loose the *wild nature*, and corrupting of Youth. And it was my great Care and Concern, to be a *good Example* before them and unto them, according to the Counsel I had often given them. And hence it is, where this Care in Carriage and Behaviour in *Parents* before their *Children* is a wanting, though such *Parents* may profess the *Truth*, it tends to drive their *Children* farther from it, and hardens their Hearts, and so they grow *Wild* and *Wanton*, *Proud* and *high minded*; and as they get up, run to *Sports* (and *Playes*, and to *Drinking* and *Tippling*) amongst the wild Rabble, as I have seen, to the grief of my Soul, in Towns and other places; and going to *Cock-fights* and *Bull-baitings*, and to stand amongst wild rude People, spying a *Fool* and

and *Mounte-bank*, acting Folly and Madneſs upon a Stage or Rope; againſt which God's Anger at ſometimes by eminent Judgments hath been manifeſted.

Example. As for Example and Proof: At a certain time, when a Perſon had acted his *Folly* upon a *Rope*, a *Wall ſuddenly fell upon many People, ſome ſtruck Dead and ſpake no more, others their Backs and Legs broken, and others ſorely Hurt, and Maimed, and Bruiſed, that their Blood came out at their Mouthes.* Therefore let the rememberance of this dread all People, ſo as not to love or delight to behold Vanity, or ſuch like Folly and Madneſs.

The Godly care of *Parents* in time, to train up their *Children* in the Fear of the Lord, and as becomes the Truth, ought to be dilligently exercciſed; for where that's wanting, theſe diſorders too often in their Children, that they grow up in *Wildneſs* and *Wantonneſs*, and in their behaviour and *Apparel* to follow the bad ways, courſes and antick *Faſhions* of the World. But who durſt do ſuch things in the beginning? and Truth is the ſame; though two many give to their Children, and take to themſelves that Liberty that they durſt not, nor would Truth ever allow of; though I know many neither can, nor do allow, nor give ſuch Liberty, neither to themſelves, nor their Children; And bleſſed and happy are they that ſo diſcharge their Duty for that end, they may be clear in the diſcharge thereof, in the day and time of their Account, which they cannot be, that do to the contrary.

Therefore *Parents* and *Guardians* of Children, diſcharge your ſelves in your Duty to your Children, or thoſe with whom you are concerned; and do not think to excuſe your ſelves with ſaying, *There is great difference of Children's Nature*: It's true, there is; but your Indulging of them, and Winking and Conniving at their running out into Vanity and Wildneſs, makes their Natures worſe, and your Children more untruth-like; and you are greatly in the blame.

How comes it to paſs that ſo many Children of thoſe that profeſs the Truth, are ſcarce come ſo far as to uſe the plain Language? What think you, that if you be Rich, and have great Portions for them, will this make them bleſſed and happy?

happy? And must they not therefore have their wills croſt? Conſider, that they are Rich that God owns and loves, and poor and miſerable that he rejects; and they are Rich that are Rich in Faith and good Works towards him, notwithſtanding poor in this World. And the Prophet ſaid, *If Riches increaſe, ſet not thy Heart upon them; for they will make themſelves Wings and fly away.* *Pſal.* 62. 10. *Prov.* 23. 5.

So *Friends*, take Counſel and be Adviſed in the Bowels of true Love by your *Friend*, that wiſheth both *you* and your *Children* Happineſs both here and hereafter. And Train up your *Children* in the Fear of the Lord in all things, as becomes the *Truth* you make *Profeſſion* of: and withal, be ſure you be a *good Example* before them, and unto them.

And now *Children*, be ſubject unto your *Parents* in that which is good, and none be Stubborn and Rebellious; for in the end, if you do, it will prove your own hurt and loſs. And if any of your *Parents* ſhew forth any evil example before you, take not Liberty thereby to do any thing that is evil, or to ſpeak evil of Truth, nor to neglect Meetings; nor none to ſatisfie your ſelves with going to Meetings barely, becauſe your *Parents* go, if you can but have Liberty to your Wills, and do and have what pleaſeth you: This is not good for your Souls Health, though you want nothing for your Bodies, neither will it make for your peace with the Lord, when you muſt be ſeparated from all Worldly enjoyment. *Eph.* 6. 1, 2, 3. *Col.* 3. 20.

So *Dear Children*, take my counſel and give ear to my Friendly and tender advice in true love unto you: let it be the concern of your minds chiefly in going to Meetings, with diligence to wait in the Fear of the Lord, to feel the Work of his Power in your Hearts to change your Nature, and ſubject your Wills to do the Will of God, to the weaning of your minds from delighting in *Sport* or *Pleaſure*, or any *Game* or *Paſtime*, or fine *Apparel*, or in earthly *Subſtance*; that ſo thereby, to wit, by the work of the Heavenly Power of God your Hearts may be wrought into true tenderneſs and brokenneſs, and Minds and Spirits into Lowlineſs and Humility before him; So will you feel *Love* to increaſe and abound in your

Hearts

Hearts towards *God*, his *Truth* and *People*; and so will you come, as you carefully mind the ſhinings of the pure *Light* of *Jeſus Chriſt*, and Teachings of his Gracious Spirit, which will manifeſt all that which is evil in every Appearance of it unto you, and teach you to do that which is good in *Word* and *Action*. I ſay, this is the way for you to come out of *Childiſhneſs* and *Childiſh things*, and all manner of Diſobedience both towards *God* and your *Parents*, and to be weaned from all the *Vanities* and *Pleaſures*, *Cuſtoms* and *Faſhions* of the World; ſo that you will have no delight in keeping Company with any but ſuch as fear the Lord, which will greatly tend to your Happineſs and Proſperity both in this Life and that which is to come, as that which teacheth you his Fear, is by you kept in. That ſo God alone may be honoured and glorified by you, and you may be a comfort to your *Parents*, and the greateſt of all in the end will be your own. Unto which the Lord preſerve and keep you in his Fear in all faithfulneſs, according to that knowledge, more or leſs, that you have received from him, out of the Evil that is in the World, is the hearty Prayer and Soul's well-wiſhing of *your Friend*, both for *You* and your *Parents*, as for my ſelf and my own *Children*, in diſcharge of my *Duty* in the Love of God. The Lord bring it home to your Underſtandings; *Amen*.

Given forth in my own dwelling-Houſe in *Cumberland*, the 20th day of the 2d *Month*, 1692. } J. B.

Let this be Read in the Fear of the Lord, and with Underſtanding, in the Meetings and Families of Friends, wherſoever a ſervice may be ſeen for it.

THE END